

Wildlife Benefits

Periodic disturbance within most forest types creates a diversity of tree ages, plant species, and wildlife habitat. Aspen communities are one of the most productive forest types, providing important habitat for a variety of wildlife. However, due to lack of natural disturbance, many of our aspen communities are older and declining. We can regenerate young aspen with prescribed fire or mechanical treatments to create a diversity of aspen age classes, increase understory growth, and enhance critical wildlife habitat. These treatment tools can also regenerate lodgepole pine stands where insects and disease have killed most of the trees and greatly reduced wildlife habitat quality. Older, less productive sagebrush and mountain shrub stands can also become more beneficial to wildlife using these treatment methods.



Conifer encroachment into aspen



Aspen regeneration and wildlife use after fire



Aspen regeneration in a harvest skid trail



Example of understory and aspen growth after conifer removal: a) pre-treatment, b) post-treatment, c) 5 years post-treatment (Krasnow et al. 2012)

